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Dear reader,

we are pleased to be a fragment of the 'exploded magazine Frag' by contributing to this printed Frago4 booklet. In their mission statement the actual Fragile team invited everyone to join in preparing, executing and analyzing their actions. The master of Urbanism went into this by inviting Kristian Koreman of the Zones Urbaines Sensibles office in Rotterdam for a lecture and participation in a 'one-day workshop' in the Fragile biotope, the (re)claimed church of Sint-Lucas Ghent. Through this initiative the students and some teachers of the master of Urbanism became brothers in arms with the Fragile

team. They set up a joint venture to raise awareness and develop a critical attitude towards reality. For some it was a wake-up call, for others a confirmation of their demarche. In our contribution on the urban dimension of Fragile (fragile magazine #2, October 2010, p.4) we started from a quote of Michel Serres 'Nous savons définir la puissance, comment penser la fragilité?' (SERRES, Michel, Le contrat naturel, Editions François Bourin, Paris, 1990, p.71.)

For this publication we decided to present the result of an 'intensive week-long workshop' (from the 12th until the 16th of November 2012) we organized in collaboration with the University of



Liège in Liège.

Over the past ten years, the City of Liège, has rolled out an ambitious city-redevelopment strategy. That's one of the reasons that the city applied for the International Expo of 2017 . They decided to choose for 'connectivity and solidarity between people all over the world' as the main theme of this Expo. More specifically Liège Expo 2017 aimed to reflect on sustainable lifestyles through creativity and innovation, both scientific and human.

Could a fragile attitude help to connect the world, to link people, to live better together? And what is the role of '(re)claiming ' in this opposition between the personal development of individu-

als and the solidarity between them? Two open questions with a multitude of opinions.

We did not ask our students to make a 'fragile project ', but we could observe an attitude in the research by design and in the design projects, that some members of the final jury called 'fragile'. In this booklet you can find the texts and drawings of the workshop-results. However, the most important outcome of this workshop is 4 short-movies (see YouTube) that the students made about their vision on urban questions in Liège

For us, this International Liège Expo 2017, was an opportunity to investigate on, what Bob Allies calls, 'cultivating the city'. This has to do with the potentialities and effects of large scale manifestations on cities, not only during, but especially after the event. He writes that the task that faces many post-industrial cities, is not one of expansion but one of 'reclamation'. This means 'the taking back of areas' in the city that are no longer required for their initial purpose. (ALLIES, Bob, Cultivating the City, London Before and After 2012, Sun publishers, Amsterdam, 2012, p.13) For this workshop the first and second master of Urbanism and Spatial Planning were (re)grouped in four teams, each with a specific topic of investigation. The topics were introduced by several lectures and each team had a mentor with expertise in that specific domain. Each team had to deal with different spatial visions, time horizons and urban missions on different locations in Liège.



The 'Expo group', investigated the relation and tradition that Liège has with organising world and international exhibitions, and also what an international exhibition could mean for Liège in the 21st century. Former world exhibitions had a major influence on the development of the city. The Expo group believes that this kind of international exposition could be based on the potentials and functions of the place and (re)claim the significance of pre-industrial and industrial sites in the city, to create possibilities for a sustainable development in this post-industrial age.

By focusing on the dynamic characteristics of the Meuse the 'Liège finds back Liège group' discovered how the urban city form and growth of Liège is inherited to the topography and the gradual transformation of the Meuse. For them the idea 'Liège finds back his river' goes far beyond the (re)development of the river banks or a lighting project of the bridges. (Re)claiming the Meuse is about (re)understanding this dynamic relationship, to think about how the Meuse could (re)connect to Liège.



The 'Liège as a city of plots group' investigated if the city of Liège could become a Metropolis through the selection and elaboration of some big projects. What is the role of each project in the making of a city and what is the balance between the expression and identity of the individual piece and that of the urban order as a whole. They looked for a more comprehensive, coordinated approach that engages with the mental and physical fabric of the city that surrounds it.

Instead of being fixated on how the design and realization of the prestigious Guillemins station project has an impact on the neighborhood, the Guillemins station group looked at what already exists to find ways of understanding how the city works around it. They supported those who live around it, how they live, how they work and how they connect. What Michel Serres should call 'penser la fragilité' instead of 'définir la puissance'.



EXPO 2017

The history of Expo's in Liège.

Looking back on the three previous expos it seems that they all derived from a strong ambition to change the structure of the city and its historical connection with the river, the Meuse. The first 'Exposition Universelle' of 1905 was located south of the city-centre, celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Independence of Belgium. To celebrate the economical development of the region and their technical know-how, Liège diverted a large part of natural flow of the Meuse and built four new bridges, therefore making an end at flooding problems.

In 1930, a second international exposition was organized in Liège, this time located north of the city centre. Because of the economical crisis, Liège did not live up to the ambition of equaling the success of the first expo of 1905. The exposition of 1939 on the other hand, had greater success. With the completion of the Albert Canal, connecting Antwerp and Liège, the expo was an overall celebration of water, as it was called 'Exposition de l'Eau'.



Expo 2017 – A lack of ambition

Since 1939 the spatial circumstances in Liège have changed drastically. The mass car ownership, the housing sprawl and the further economical development have led to a much larger and diffuse territory. Despite this changed situation, the expo of 2017 is again located along the Meuse and, more importantly, seems to be devised without the ambition of influencing the city in a more permanent way. The expo 'Connecting People' focuses on the positive evolution of the high-tech industry in and around Liège, but has ironically no real connection with the history or contemporary situation of the city.

The history and the landscape of Liège

This changed figuration of the city on one hand, and the discovery of underestimated historical urban elements on the other hand, led to a new proposal for the expo. Its main purpose is to connect the event with the history of the city and with the surrounding land-



scape, leading to a larger, perceptive and structural impact.

Four local potentials lie at the base of this project. The first is the elevated Citadel (built in 1663 until 1711), part of the monumental triangle together with the fort of Chartreuse (built in 1817) and the Dome of Cointe (built in 1936). These edifices visually and mentally link the city, situated in the valley, with the hinterland.

A second potential is the former presence of the vineyards along the hillside of the Meuse, that already existed in the middle ages. Their reconstruction could have a great impact on the social structure and local economy of the city. The spoil tips (terrils) witness of the coal industry (from the end of the 19th century to the mid-20th century) all around the levee of Liège, are the next objets trouvés. They are silent witnesses of the industrial history of Liège which, through natural transformation, became green areas that structures the sprawl of Liège.

Finally the fourth potential is the presence of historical routes that connect the water, the river bank, the slopes and the levee. The 'Montagne de Bueren' connects the lower city and the citadel. Today this stairway (1880) is a place for multiple local events. The 'Haute promenade' on the levee gives a view upon the valley and the outskirts. This historical route is distinguished by the accompanying plane trees. The 'Place of Saint-Leonard' was a former dock transformed into a square to become an open space between the water and the 'route of sheep' on the hillside.

These four potentials, located within a stone's throw from each other, led to the idea of devising the expo as an exhibition in the landscape of Liège. This event is a great occasion to develop these separate parts into a landscape park.

Connecting the local and supra-local

The next step is connecting these separate elements with each other on a local scale and embed them in supra-local networks.

On the local scale a loop is created that allows the expo to consist of a circular walk, merged with the surrounding landscape. The steep path between the lower and the higher site of the expo is made more accessible by adding two cable-lines. The two stations arrive at the 'Haute promenade', connecting the multiple spots of the expo. In the course of time other green zones along this loop can be further implemented to make a more continuous green zone. On a supra-local scale, different transport modes (Car- tram- train- boat- and bike-networks) arrive at the four entrances of the loop.



The Expo program

Three different locations with ranging programs will make a sequence of impressions along the loop. Depending on the location, we suggest different kinds of installations. Tent-like constructions in the landscape operate as temporary concert equipment. The reconversion of the 'Grand Palais' and a main building, situated along the waterside, serve as main exposition buildings. Finally the horn-work of the Citadel accommodates the pavilions of participating countries.

After the Expo?

By underscoring present valuable urban elements and joining them together for the expo, we aim for several long-lasting outcomes that will increase the impact of the expo of 2017 to the overall image of the city.

First of all, the city will be accommodated with green public space, a much needed urban facility. Further implementation of other nearby green zones allows the development of a large park close to the lower city. Production landscapes can contribute to the local social tissue. Art and cultural events can go together with this new setting.

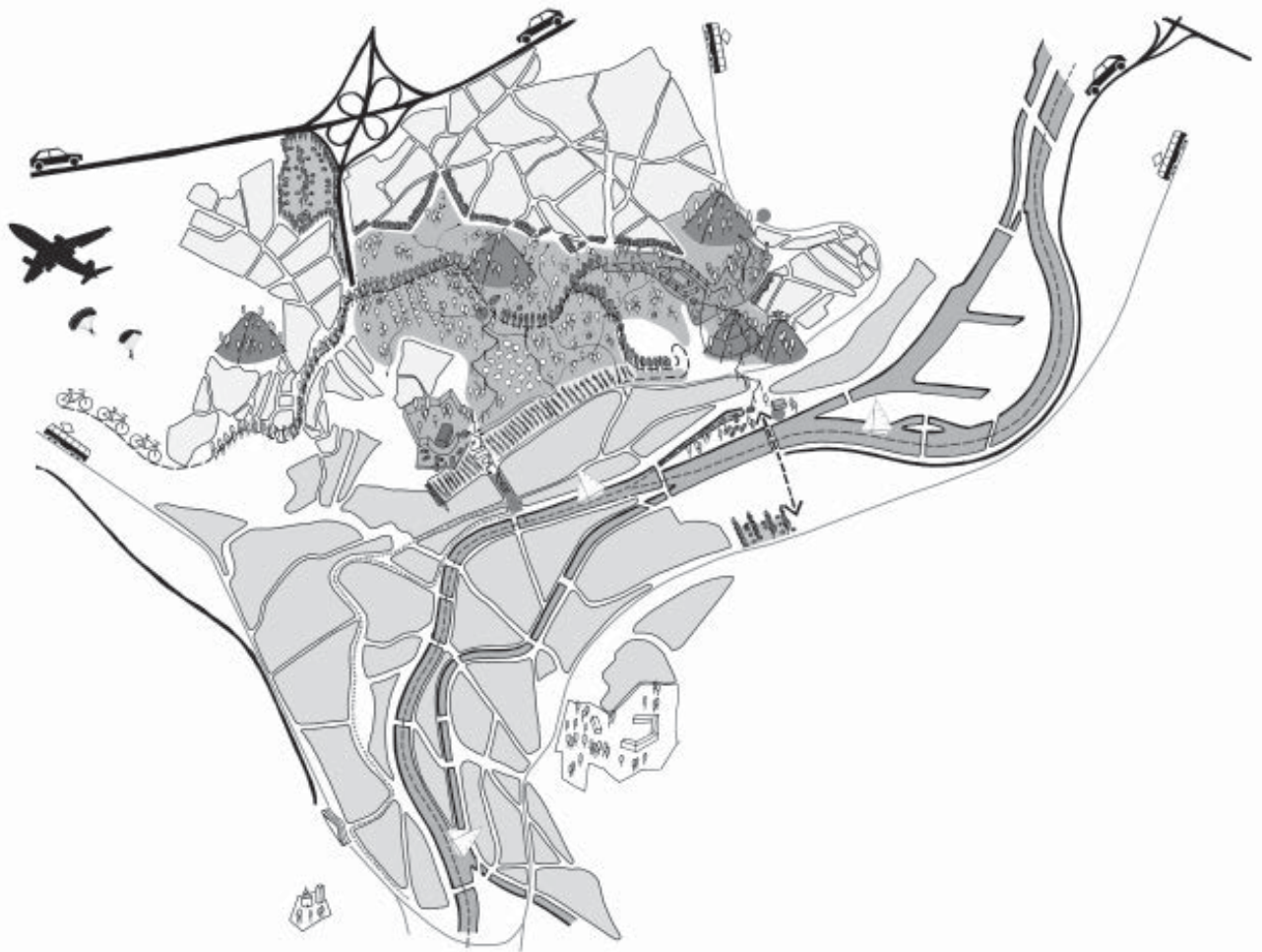
Secondly, by upgrading what is already present, Liège can enfold its own forgotten history. The importance of these historical landscape elements is emphasized, whereby other similar constructions are brought under the attention.



Next, the project is a plea to safeguard this part of the city from further unstructured urbanization. By doing this, the surrounding residential areas can benefit. These zones will further densify and redirect themselves towards the park. The passable path structure allows a quick and pleasant walk downtown.

Fourthly, creating a new park & ride along the outer ring around Liège, connected with the city centre by the new cableway, the project is an example of how car traffic through the city core could be reduced.

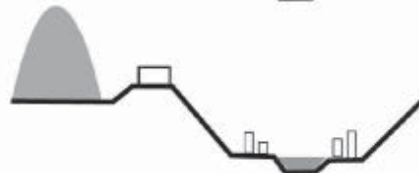
Finally, by taking part in the European project 'Pays des Terrils', the park will be embedded in a large scale historical green structure. This project wants to reveal the peculiar locations through the mining valley from Liege to Aachen. By taking part, the expo seeks allies across borders, possibly helpful to persuade the International Exhibitions Bureau in accepting the Belgian candidacy.



1. The military constructions form a visual connection with the city and the surrounding landscape.



2. The reconstruction of the historical vineyards connects the valley and the levee.



3. These witnesses of industrial history bring structure in the surrounding outskirts.



4. Present historical routes connect the water, the river bank, the slopes and the levee.

LIEGE RETROUVE LIEGE

Dynamic river

The Meuse has formed the valley-rich landscape in the north-eastern part of Wallonia, Belgium. The residue of this geographical process is still present in the current geomorphology. Nowadays, the Meuse functions mostly as an industrial axis for transport of goods. But it has not always been this way. Liège is one of the cities that is founded at the confluence of the Ourthe and the Meuse. The river has always had a prominent role in the evolution and functioning of the city, making it a dynamic feature.

Turning point

During the industrial revolution, a turning point took place in the position towards the river. Instead of embracing it as a part of the tissue, the people of Liège turned their back on the river. This was a consequence of two main problems being floods and cholera. The city decided that it was best to drain the side-arms. Also, the main flow was

canalized. The newly created place first served as public space, but later the car made use of these opportunities to plant its infrastructure.

Obstacle

These infrastructural changes brought a change in identity as well. The present situation is a car-polluted city, and the role of the river has been downgraded to mainly the function of industrial transport. The heavy traffic on the quays is an obstacle between the urban fabric and the river. The water system has evolved from a network and identity-providing entity into a purely infrastructural barrier. The Meuse no longer has a function with or relation with the city.

The river makes the city ?!

The city of Liège realizes these problems itself, and proposes to reconnect with the water under the slogan 'Liege retrouve sa fleuve.' But where they see their river as the Meuse in its current situation, we believe this point of view is far too restrained and generic. The Meuse as it is now is not only the current stream, but it's the system of water flows that formed the city and its surroundings.

By restoring part of this historical water network, we will restore Liège's identity. Historical buildings will be brought





back to their rightful place and a new diversity of waterfronts will appear. This intervention has the power to activate and intensify less developed parts of the city and as we can see in other successful water cities, a new form of water based transport can be introduced.

Ring of water

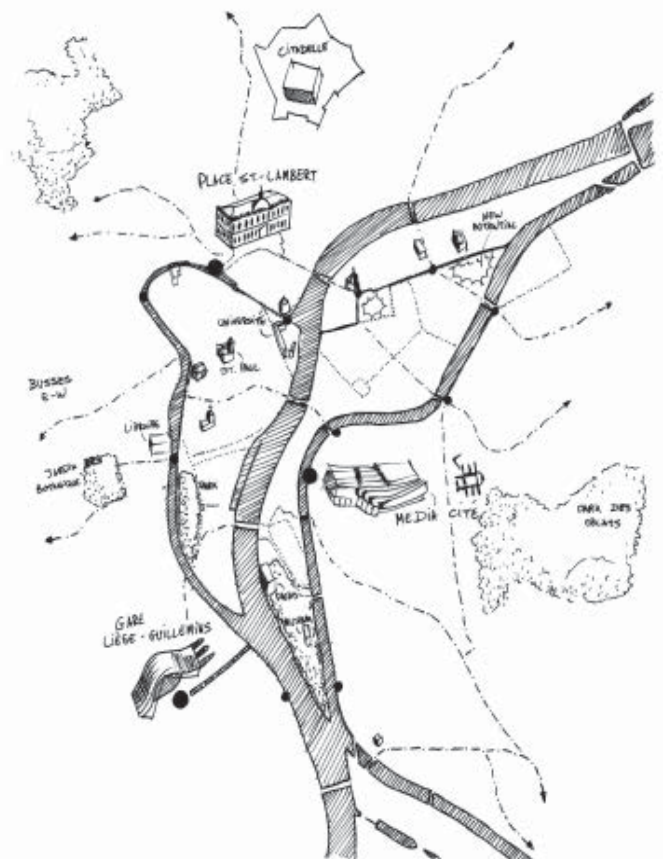
By strategically reopening certain side-arms of the river we can create a closed circuit of water channels. Within this circuit we will connect the three most important locations in the city: Place St.-Lambert, Liège Guillemins and Media city, as well as other important or potentially important places. The amount of cars next to the river will be decreased and a new way of exploring and experiencing the city is presented!

Flexible intercity mobility

Another challenge the city is facing, is the North to South connection. In search for a solution they propose a public transportation system on the scale of the agglomeration that takes form as a tramway along the riverbank. The Meuse as an alternative is both

cheaper and more intelligent, using existing infrastructure and restoring the water as a connective element. Additionally, one can experience a sequence of different landscapes: rural, urban, industrial and natural.

Transportation lines can be divided in Intercity boat lines (Seraing, Liège, Herstal) and Interregional boat lines (serves all regions.) For certain temporary events (expo, soccer matches) or new developments extra boats can be put into circuit. The water transportation system proves itself very flexible.



Network

The Meuse runs parallel with two other public transportation lines (railroads.) These are as complementary as possible. Transportation hubs are placed at the three city centers, here you can change from one transportation mode to another. The main railway stations connect train, car (park & ride), bike and boat.

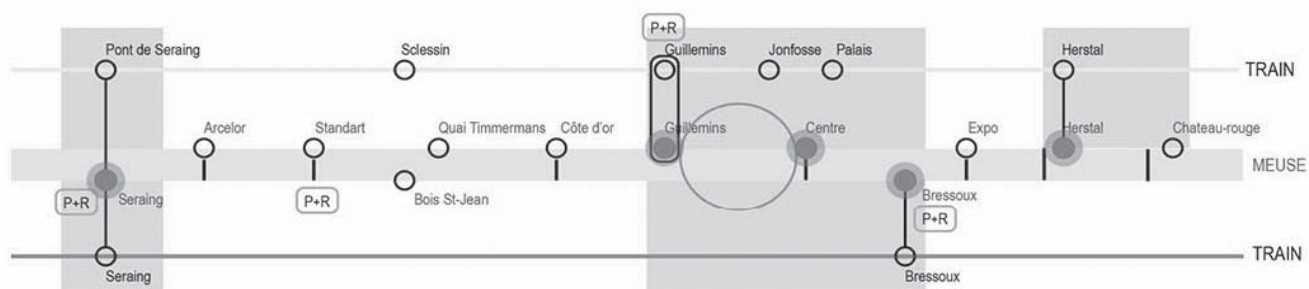
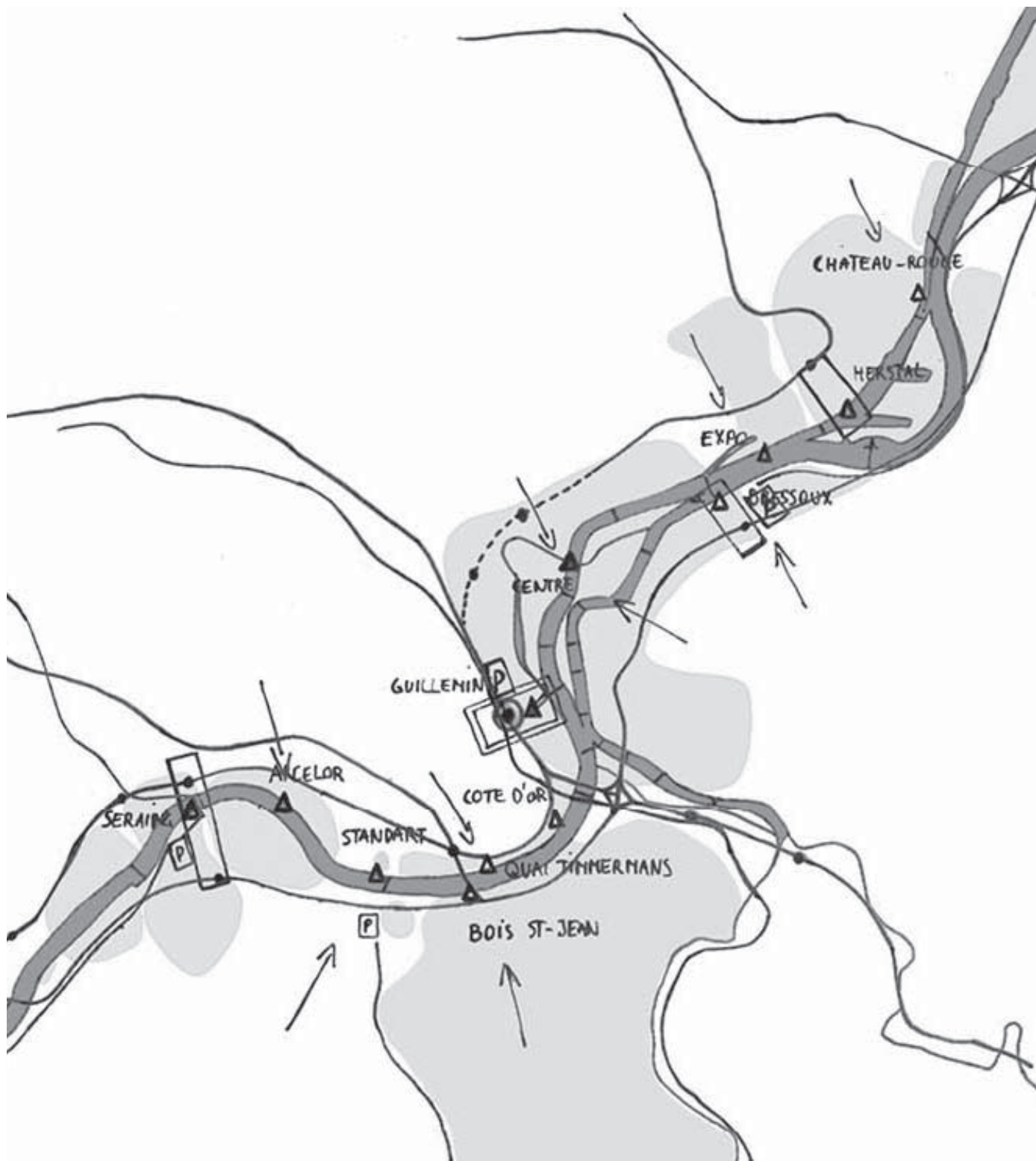
There is a possibility to interchange between the fast and slower network of boats. These links are made on 2 places alongside the main river. These different scales of transportation have different modi (boats.) The large intercity boats are high speed, whilst the smaller river ring makes use of slower boats. A

third scale is introduced, which is the network of smaller canals. This third network makes use of a third shape of boat, which are smaller privately owned, tourist boats or water taxis.

By focusing on development of water in a broader way, we bring Liège back to its origin, the city by the water. A solution for public transportation and the city revival while strengthening identity.

Liège retrouve Liège!





CITY OF PLOTS

The city of Liège started the program 'une Ville une Métropole des grands projets' engaged in the design and realization of twelve big city projects with the intension to materialize there 'Project de Ville 2007-2015' who will be the base of further territorial development to transform Liège in a metropolis by 2015.

Looking for a common ground

After a first screening and intensive visit of the twelve projects we realized that the projects were spread over the city but we couldn't find what those projects have in common. In trying to understand the balance between the expression and identity of the individual piece and that of the urban order as a whole we observed that some of those architectural projects are designed as isolated, architectural autonomous, pieces, however others try to inscribe themselves into the existing surroundings. What is the role of each piece in the making of the metropolis Liège?



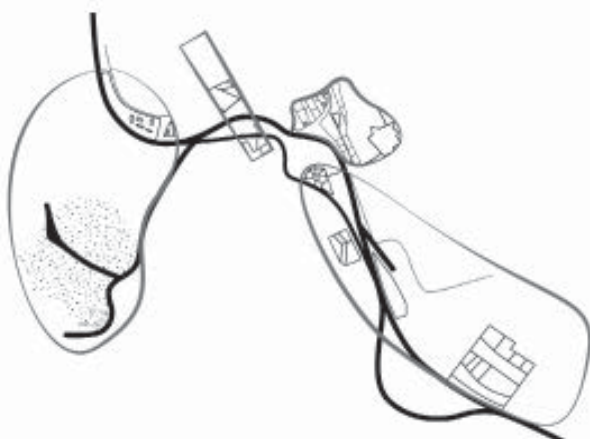
Looking for a more comprehensive, coordinated approach we were looking for a kind of psycho-geographical map of Liège to evaluate the significance of those twelve projects and how they re-enforce the urban context.

Four cities within the city

Oswald Mathias Ungers developed in 1977 within his concept of 'the archipelago city' the notion of 'cities within the city'. A model to create formal and formative pockets of meaning and significance within the city. In this model city-projects aren't simply a filling in but play a pivotal role as punctual interventions within the larger urban field. Starting from the insights of Ungers we investigated how morphological structures can create a collectivity and how new city projects could re-enforce this collectively through a morphological anchoring. After a precise historical analysis we found four different morphological structures to represent Liège.

The historic armature

Where Liège emerged we found the historic armature consisting of three different tissues; 'île' a tissue defined by a road system connecting the two riverbanks of an old Meuse meander, 'cité' around the place Saint-Lambert, and 'St. Léonard' defined by two his-



torical roads parallel to the Meuse. These three tissues are connected through historical roads. Projects such as the renovation of public functions as 'le Théâtre Royal pour l'Opéra' and 'le Théâtre de la Place à l'Emulation, the swimming pool in 'Jonfosse', a renovation of an exceptional building ensemble and regrouping of several collections in the 'museum le grand Curitus' project, the project to restructure place Saint-Lambert and place du Marché by the site du Tivoli project. Because the interaction with the historic armature is so intense in this plot through both their program and urban setting it is crucial to understand its genesis.

The archipel constellation

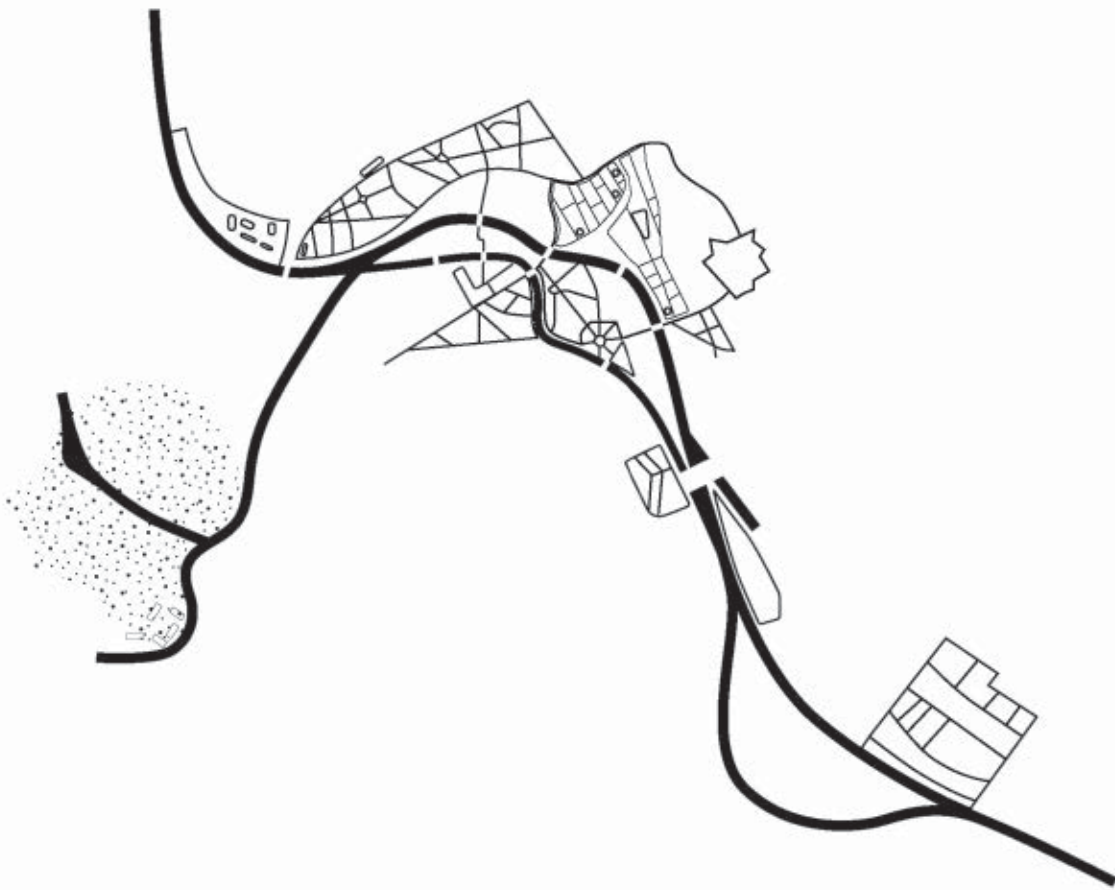
To the east of the historic center, downstream of the river Meuse we came across several bigger morphological entities all situated along the water. In this bigger constellation of isolated islands the 'Bavière' housing project for 600 houses, the 'quartier de Droixhe' renovation project of 430 houses and the 'quai de Wallonie' redevelopment

of the river bank project is situated. Our strategy is to preserve, even reinforce, the identity of those cityparts and connect them by building several bridges. This connection will be made by a common ground consisting of the water structure and the green of the old expo site. What was before separating will now connect those very specific entities.

The generic part

Around the station of Liège we encountered two metropolitan objects, Guillemins train station, designed by Santiago Calatrava and the shopping mall Médiacité designed by Ron Arad. With the transformation of the existing tissue by a sequence of metropolitan buildings and public spaces, the city has the ambition to connect these two introvert and morphological isolated functions with each other. After a morphological re-reading of the site we conclude that instead of this brutal intervention a different position of the station towards the existing boulevard would have created better opportunities to re-use. Using this existing axis would not only provide a strong connection and sequence between the re-





located station and the mediacité but has also the advantage that, by using this axis, it incorporates one of the major structuring elements of the existing tissue. Our proposal for the generic part consist of a strategy of coexistence between the existing quarter of Guillemins and la Boverie and the new metropolitan programs.

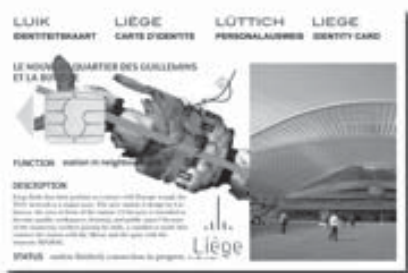
The campus model

Upstream the river Meuse situated in the south of Liege we found several old industrial sites, a science park and some interesting green structures. In this fourth urban plot are situated the 'Val-Benoit' brown-field project and the office project in the 'Rue de Namur'. By taking nature as a base, we can make a continuous green campus area capable to deal with heterogamous ar-

chitecture and functions. Our proposal offers Liège a 'green image' by entering the city from the south by transforming the perception of this 'brownfield' into a 'greenfield' and by connecting through this campus model both sides of the Meuse.

The tram connects the four urban plots.

The urban entities each have their own spatial logic and are a frame to evaluate and design projects in that framework and are a better base for further territorial development in transforming Liège in a metropolis by re-enforcing rather than losing the qualities of the four morphological structures who could and should represent Liège as a truly polycentric city of four mentally and spatially different urban plots connected by a planned tramline.



Liège
Une ville, un esprit.



RETHINKING THE STATION AREA

Liège formed by stations

Liège transformed during the 19th century into an industrial city, driven by the economic revolution. The pinched position between the surrounding hilly landscape and the river Meuse played a major role in structuring the city. Multiple railway stations were implemented to support the booming economy of metal and coals. These stations fulfilled an important role in the expansion of the city. Today there are four stations: Liège Guillemins, Jonfosse, Palais and Bressoux. Liège Guillemins is in meaning and atmosphere different compared to the other. It operates as the international hub between Luxembourg, Maastricht, Namur, Hasselt and Brussels. The other stations rather focus on local traffic and make the connection with the city center of Liège.

An international hub or a gap in the urban fabric?

The original station of Liège Guillemins was built in wood in 1842 on the site of the former convent of Guillemites. It was replaced in 1863 by a stone building in French style. This building was enlarged in 1881 and 1905 and replaced by a 'modern station building' in 1956. During the nineties plans were set up to replace the station by a prestigious project in order to be prepared to host the arrival of the high speed train. This replacement should give an interna-

tional added value to the city. To obtain this goal, the Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava was asked to create a new futuristic station for Liège. He ignored the existing context and designed a station, similar to his previous works. This resulted in an isolated XL object that was dropped into Liège. The inauguration took place in September 2009. While the new station was under construction the old station remained in use. The location of the new station was therefore misaligned with the historical axis Rue Guillemins. By creating this type of station, Calatrava showed the inferior of the existing urban context and fabric compared to his design. He proposed, in extension to the station, a new and bigger axis in order to connect his architectural statement with the Meuse. The existing urban tissue was demolished and an enormous gap appeared. Anno 2012, Liège wants to restore this gap. The masterplan made by the city incorporates Calatrava's idea of creating a forced axis between the station and the Meuse.

Just Liège

Our design pleads for a different approach. Therefore we try to understand the characteristics of the station area. We analyzed the existing structure, historic evolution and identity. Easily we found intrinsic qualities that Calatrava and others clearly ignored. In combination with the station, the small grain of

the urban fabric, creates an almost poetic image. From our point of view we filled up the gap Calatrava created on a far more contextual way.

We maintained the existing axis Rue Guillemins to connect the station with the other side of the Meuse instead of replacing this connection with a new axis. In order to reconnect the existing tissue, the historical structure was reused by reinterpreting the original street pattern. At the same time we had to keep in mind the presence of the international station and its consequences. Creating a dense mix of functions in the direct presence of the station would intensify the neighborhood. A new tram line is proposed to establish a connection between the station and the city center, the Mediacité and a new business district.

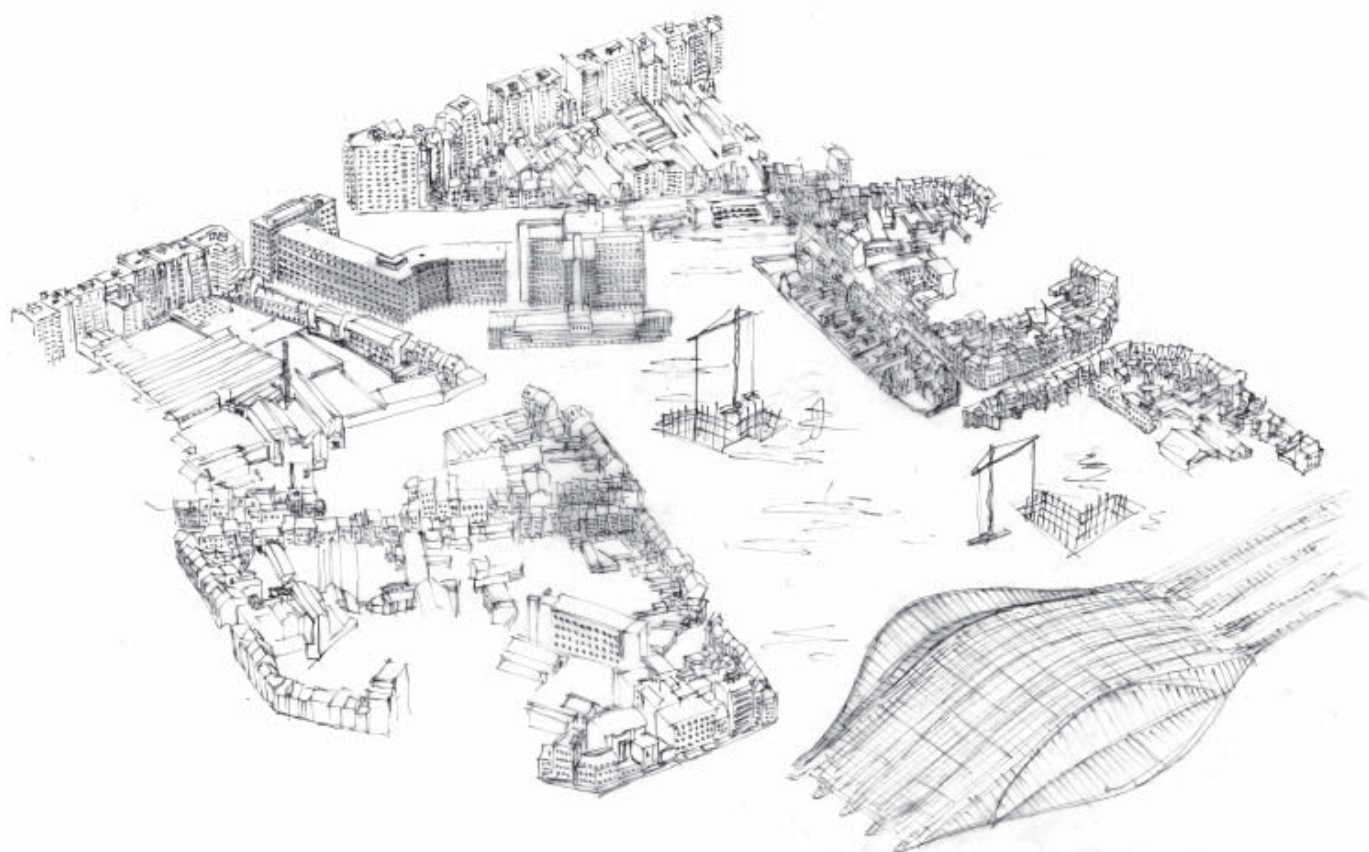
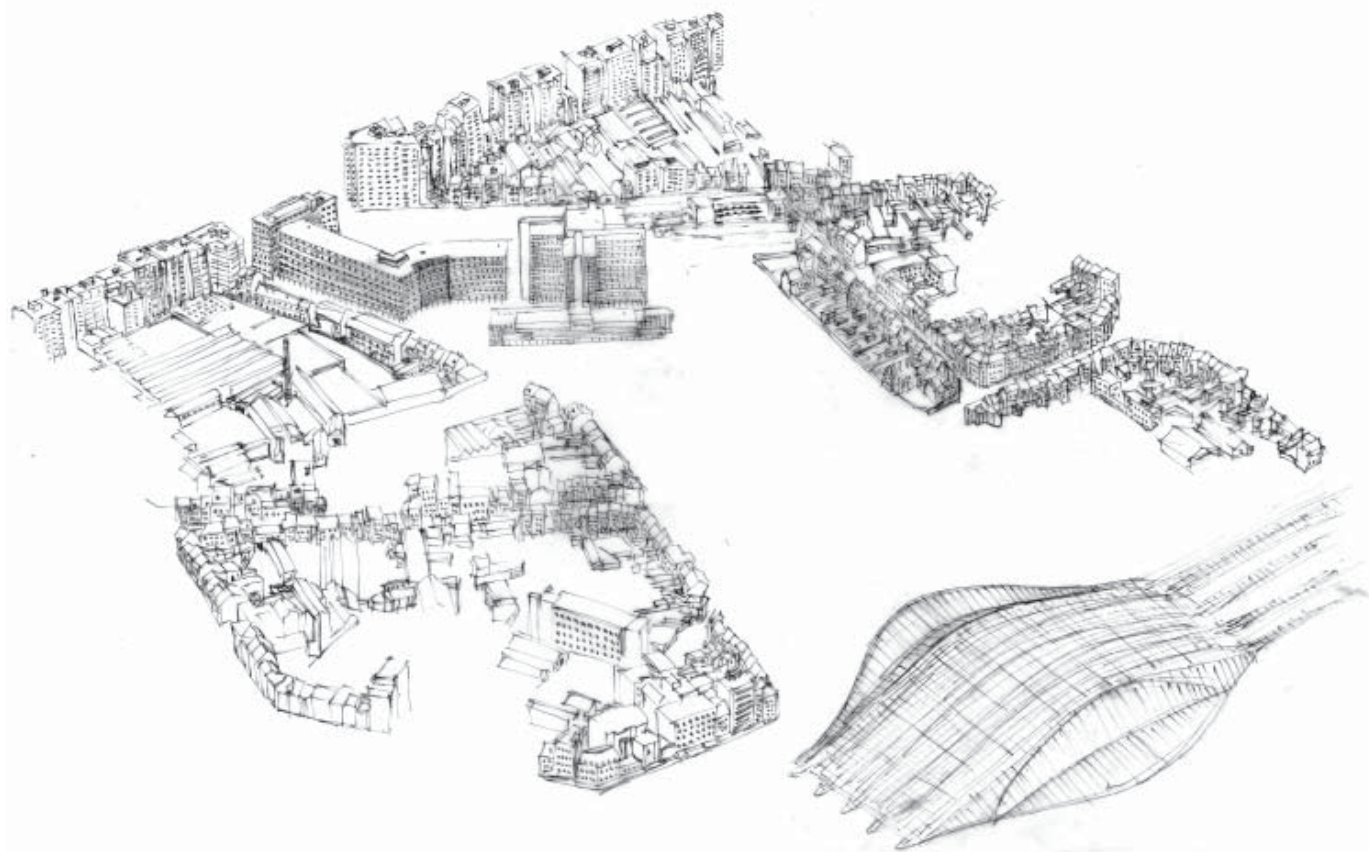
The new urban tissue should be a mix of typologies. This is executed by small scaled buildings with the same grain as the surrounding building blocks, combined with big buildings towers and residential blocks. These are not

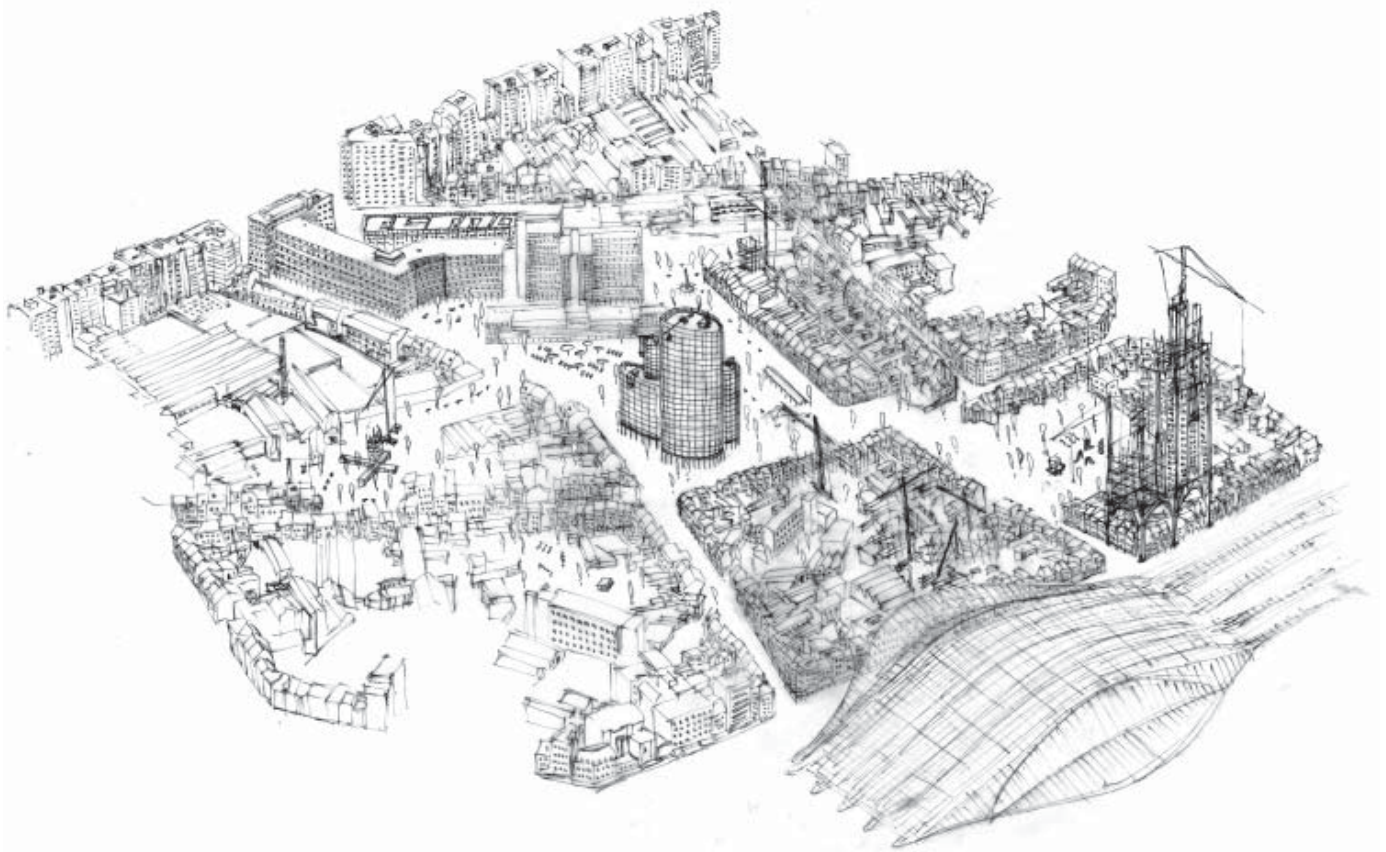
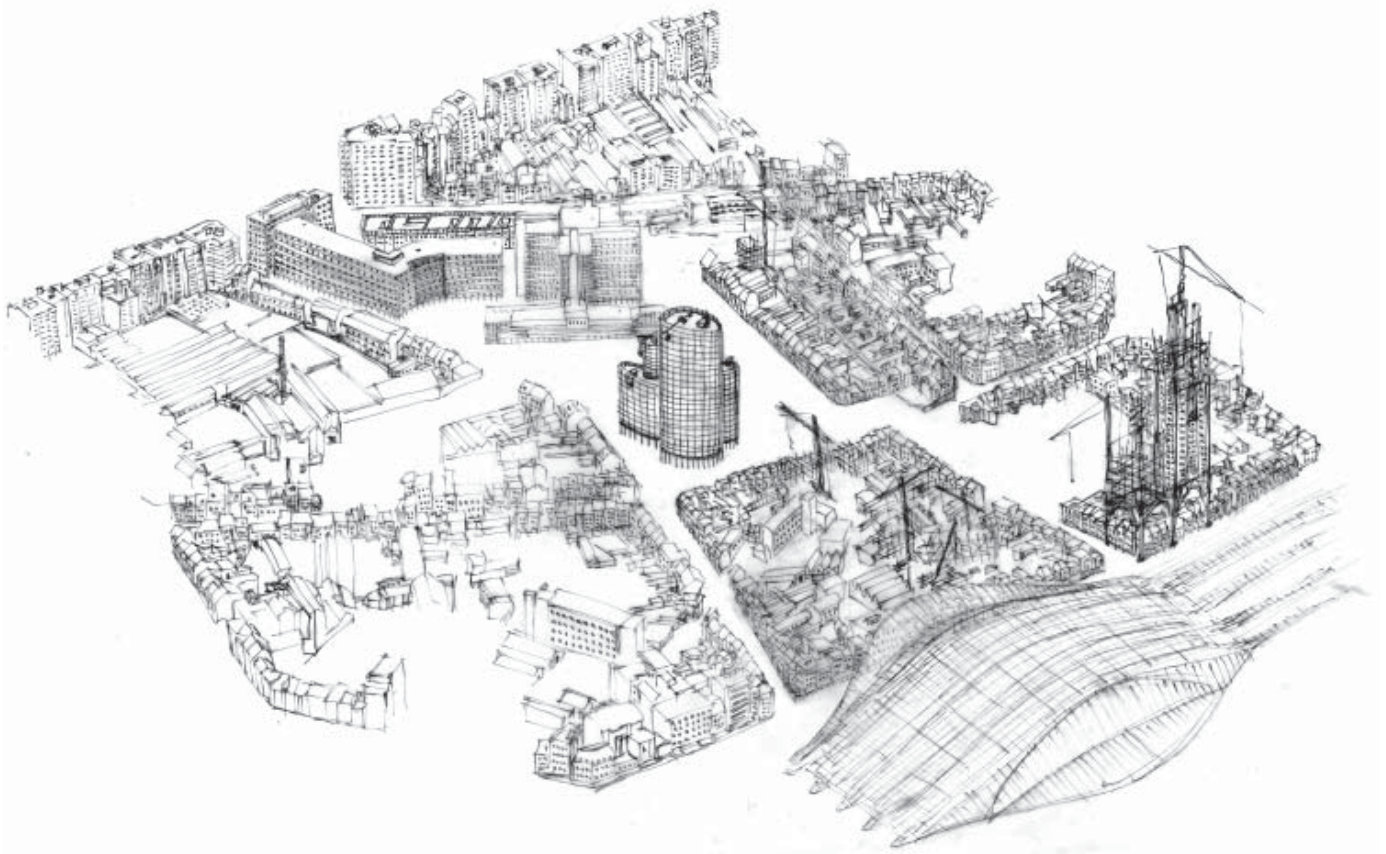
counteracting but strengthening each other's qualities. Our goal was to create a new permeable urban tissue in which a great variety of public space can be organized. The new station district should become a unique place where the authentic atmosphere of the station district is incorporated in a new kind of city fabric.

A Fragile strategy

Our strategy is a way of looking at things that makes our environment more plural and our understanding more critical. Fragile might be all about these simultaneities, where multiple stories need to be told, where coherence is more important than one-way ideologies. It is about the design of conditions, a design strategy against the objectification of design and planning.







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